AGED 607 YOUTH LEADERSHIP
ACTIVITY 3-9: BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Part 1 Directions: Poor communication is often the result of multiple factors. For this list below, please indicate the 5 items that you believe are the MOST serious barriers to effective communication in groups.

1. Sender has poor knowledge of subject and is inadequately prepared.
2. Sender does not believe in message or policy behind it.
3. Receiver has poor knowledge of subject and is inadequately prepared.
4. Receiver is not interested in subject.
5. Sender or receiver is temporarily preoccupied.
6. Unintentional failure of people to say what they mean.
7. Sender and receiver have very different vocabularies.
8. Cultural differences exist between communicators.
9. Professional differences exist between communicators.
10. Communicators have different assumptions.
12. One of the communicators has negative or hostile reactions to the other.
13. One of the communicators tends to be a "yes man" to the other.
14. One or both parties are unintentionally miscommunicating.
15. There is outside interference or distraction.
16. Pressure of time exists.
17. Inadequacy of words to express difficult concepts, relationships, or situations.
18. Same words have different meanings.
19. Inadequate feedback system.
20. Sender and receiver belong to different sub-groups.
21. Differences in age between communicators.


Now, go to Part 2 on the next page
Part 2 Directions: In the next 5 minutes, read the story below. Then answer the questions below the story. When you are finished with the questions, go on to Part 3.

The Story

A businessman had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened a cash register. The contents of the cash register were scooped up, and the man sped away. A member of the police force was notified promptly.

Questions to Answer

1. A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights. T F ?
2. The robber was a man. T F ?
3. The man did not demand money. T F ?
4. The man who opened the cash register was the owner. T F ?
5. The store owner scooped up the contents of the cash register and ran away. T F ?
6. Someone opened a cash register. T F ?
7. After the man who demanded the money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away. T F ?
8. While the cash register contained money, the story does not state how much. T F ?
9. The robber demanded money of the owner. T F ?
10. The story concerns a series of events in which only three persons are referred to: the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and member of the police force. T F ?
11. The following events in the story are true: Someone demanded money, a cash register was opened, its contents were scooped up, and a man dashed out of the store. T F ?

Now, go to Part 3 on the next page
Part 3 Directions: Compare your answers with the correct responses (underlined, bold, italic):

1. A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights. T F ?
   A businessman turned off the lights; was he the owner?
2. The robber was a man. T F ?
   The man who appeared could have been a son, father, or friend.
3. The man did not demand money. T F ?
   Yes, he did!
4. The man who opened the cash register was the owner. T F ?
   The owner could have been a female.
5. The store owner scooped up the contents of the cash register and ran away. T F ?
   Someone scooped up the contents, we do not know who.
6. Someone opened a cash register. T F ?
   True!
7. After the man who demanded the money scooped up the contents of the cash register, he ran away. T F ?
   Don't know who scooped up the contents.
8. While the cash register contained money, the story does not state how much. T F ?
   Don't know if the register contained money. It could have contained checks, stocks, drugs, keys, etc.
9. The robber demanded money of the owner. T F ?
   Don't know if the man who demanded money was a robber; could have been a brother, etc.
10. The story concerns a series of events in which only three persons are referred to: the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and member of the police force. T F ?
    + the businessman who may or may not have been the owner.

Discussion Questions

1. How many assumptions did you make when answering the questions?
2. What are the implications for successful communication when people make assumptions?
3. How do assumptions affect the values of group communication and decision-making?